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The way to prosper.

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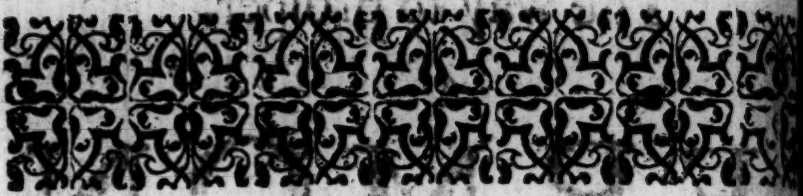
St Pauls Crosse on Sunday the
27. day of May, being
Trinitie SUNDAY.

By Iohn Gore Rector of Wenden-
lofts in ESSEX.



L O N D O N,


Printed for JOHN PARKER, and are to be sold
at his Shop in Pauls Churchyard, at the
signe of the Sunne. 1646.



Recensui hunc Librum, cui titulus est [A Sermon
preached at S. Pauls Crosse on Trinitie Sunday,
unâ cum Epistola nuncupatoria ad dignissimum virum
Johannem Mede, Militem, &c. qui quidem liber continet
vel septem folia, in quibus nihil reperio bonis moribus, et
sana doctrina contrarium, quò minus cum utilitate in
primatur, modò intra tres menses proximè sequentes typis
mandetur.

Guilielmus Bray, Episcopus
Londinensi Capellanus
domesticus.

Ex adibus Fulhamiensibus,
Junii 6. 1632.





To the Right VVorshipfull
Sr IOHN MEDE
KNIGHT,
High-Sheriffe for the County of
E S S E X;

My bountifull and uncorrupted Patron,

Right Worshipfull,

My Talent is little, but my love
is great; were I able to ex-
presse it in a greater mea-
sure, or in an higher nature,
you should be sure to finde it;
but I must say with that Fa-
ther, *ὁ δὲ λόγος ἔχειμεν*, &c. All that poore Mi-
nisters have to requite their friends withall is
Bookes and Prayers; Accept therefore I be-
seech you, this weake Sermon (not worth the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

name of a Book) as a pledge of my humble thankfulness: and for my prayers to God on the behalf of your selfe, your good Lady, and your young Children and Family, they shall be wanting from

Your poore devoted
Chaplain,

JOHN GOL



A
SERMON
Preached at S. Pauls-Crosse
on *Trinity Sunday*. 1632.

2 CHRON. 26.5.

*So long as he sought the Lord, God made him
to prosper.*



Hese words containe the prosperous and successfull estate of King *Uzziah*, during all the time that hee served and sought the Lord; but as soone as ever hee fell foule with his God, hee fell downe from his happinesse, and his prosperity went away with his piety: just as you see your Comets and Meteors that hang in the ayre, so long as they keepe aloft in the firmament of heaven they glister and shine, and make a glorious celestiaall lustre in the eyes of all beholders; but if once they decline from that pitch and fall downe to
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the earth (as many times they doe) they vanish, and dis-appeare, and come to nothing. Such is the case betwixt a man and his God, as long as a man holds in good termes with God, and hath his conversation in heaven, and sets his affections upon things above, so long God will cast his favour upon him, and he shall shine as a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; but if once he decline from that pitch, and fall downe from a godly conversation, into any earthly, base, ungodly disposition, tis a venture but his prosperity will vanish away, and his latter end prove worse then his beginning. Here then is a worthy president for all that doe desire to prosper; as I suppose tis every mans desire so to doe, as one said *Beatus vult homo esse, etiam non sic vivendo ut possit esse*; Every man would be blessed, though hee take a course to be cursed, every man would goe to heaven, though he run the way that leads directly to hell; so every man would prosper, though he take a course to perish; but if a man doth desire true prosperity, that God indeed should prosper him, and give a blessing to all that belongs unto him, let him take the course that *Raziah* sometime did, let him seeke the Lord, and God will make him to prosper. *So long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.*

In which words are two generall things to be observed;

1. The ground and foundation of true prosperity.

2. The bounds and limitation of it.

First, the ground and foundation of true prosperity, and that is this; It must bee built and raised

sed upon religion and pietie, God must be sought unto, ere true prosperitie can bee attain'd to. (*Her sought the Lord, and God made him to prosper.*)

Secondly, the bounds and limitation of prosperity, how far it reacheth, and how long it lasteth, and that is, onely during the time that he serves and seekes the Lord, [*So long as he sought the Lord, so long (and no longer) God made him to prosper.*]

In the first observe two particulars, Mans duty, and Gods mercie; First, mans dutie to seeke God; Secondly, Gods mercy to prosper them that seeke him. Now because the whole hope of our prosperitie, and Gods successe, depends onely upon our piety in seeking of God; I will therefore branch it out into foure circumstances, which like the foure Rivers of *Eden*, shall (I trust) water this Garden-plot of God, and make your soules prosper the better.

1. What it is to seeke God.
 2. How, and in what manner we must seeke him.
 3. When, or what time.
 4. Where or in what place wee must seeke him;
- I meane so, as that wee may prosper by seeking him, for that is the *basis*, the ground-woke of my whole Sermon, and shall (by Gods assistance) be intermingled, and interwoven into every point.

First, what it is to seeke God, so as a man may prosper by seeking him. To seeke God is nothing else but to seeke to please God, to seeke to get into favour with God, to seeke to get Gods good will; as the *Sidonians* did with *Herod*, *Acts* 12. 20. When they heard that *Herod* was displeased with them, and intended to make warre upon them, they made friends.

friendship with *Blastus* the Kings Chamberlaine, and sought by all meanes possible to get into favour with him againe; and why? Because (said they) our lands are nourished by the lands of the King. This is our case, our lands, our lives, and all that wee have are nourished and sustained by the King of heaven; and therefore when wee know that hee is displeased with us, as justly hee may (for as *David* saith) *Wee provoke him every day*, then let us doe as they did, as they made friendship with *Blastus*; so let us make friendship with Jesus Christ, and desire him to help us into Gods favour: And this is that we call the seeking of God. Now this phrase of seeking God, implies that we are at a losse in this behalfe; and indeed so we are; wee have all of us lost the favour of God by our sinnes, and except wee seeke to regaine and recover it by our prayers and repentance, wee must never looke to prosper. Not prosper may some say? Why, who prospers more many times then they that have least care, and make least conscience to serve and seeke the Lord, they that live altogether by usury and oppression, by bribery and extortion, by fraud and ill dealing, that have not God in all their thoughts, who prosper more then they? I answer to that, and I hope I shall make it appeare, that a man that seekes not God may thrive in the world; grow rich, and gather goods, and yet not prosper neither. Wealth is one thing, prosperity another. A man never truly prospers till hee come to have *Gaius* his prosperity, whereof you shall read in the third Epistle of Saint *Iohn*, ver. 2. *I wish above all things that thou maist prosper, even as thy soule prospereth.*

When

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When a mans soule doth prosper in grace and goodnes inwardly, together as his estate doth prosper in wealth and substance outwardly, that, and none but that is true prosperitie. Again, many times it falls out so, and a man in himself shall find it so, that his soul prospers best, when his estate prospers worst. Many a man is like the Pine tree, of which they write, that if the barke be peeled off, it will last a long time; else it rots: so God sees, that many a man if hee had his bark upon him, if he had the wealth of the world about him, it would rot him, and make him worse, therefore God is faine to barke him, and peelee him, to keepe him naked and bare, and poor, that his soule may prosper the better.

Saint *Augustine* gives two reasons why it pleaseth God to withhold outward prosperity from them that inwardly prosper, and to deny outward blessings to them whom he hath inwardly blest with grace; first, lest wicked people should thinke, *ob hoc colendum Deum*, that Gods servants did serve him onely for these things: as the devill accused *Iob* chapter 1. 10. Hast thou not considered my servant *Iob* (saith God) how upright he walkes, and how carefully he serves me? I cannot blame him (quoth Satan) that hee serves thee, hee doth it *propter seipsum*, for his owne need, to serve his owne turne, for thou makest such an hedge about him, and so fencest him in with thine invinsible protection, that none of all his enemies can make the least gap to breake in upon him; doe but put forth thy hand (saith the devill) *manum lazivam*, (he meanes) thy punishing, thy vindictive revenging hand, and touch him with that (as

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the Spider toucheth the Bee) touch him to torment him, and thou shalt see *Iob* will turne another leaf, and in stead of blessing thee, will curse thee to thy face. Yea, dost thou thinke so (saith God) doe thou take him to doe, He give thee leave, punish him, afflict him, doe any thing to him, spare but his life, and thou shalt see *Iob* will serve mee no lesse then hee did before; and so it fell out. And the same mind doe all Gods faithfull servants beare, prosper or not prosper, thrive or not thrive, rewarded or not rewarded, all is one to them, they will and are resolved to serve and seeke the Lord. Secondly, Lest Gods servants should bear a mercenary mind, and serve him onely to make a gaine of his service, and so alwayes be looking and lingering after temporall favours; this would turne *patientiam in avaritiam*, Christian patience into carnall covetousnesse, and make men carnally minded in their spirituall affaires: that were *indignitas*, (as the Apostle speakes) an affection of dishonour, and would discover a kinde of basenesse in Gods servants to seeke him onely for their own ends; therefore God sees it best in some cases, to restraine prosperitie from them that seeke him, and that, *also consilio*, upon deepe advice, and great reason, as you see; First, to convince the world of their misopinion of Gods servants. Secondly, to rectifie the affection of them that serve him, that they may learne not to linger after that which God in his wisdom sees good to hold them short of.

But for the prosperitie of wicked and ungodly men (to returne to that) of such as seek not the Lord, but rather mingle their wealth with wickednesse, and mixe

mixe their prosperity with blasphemy, that set their mouth against heaven and say, as 'tis in *Iob, chap. 21.*
15. Who is the Almighty that wee should serve him?
and what profit should wee have if wee pray unto him?
 Such men as these, the more outwardly happy they are, the more undoubtedly miserable; that which we count the felicity and the happinesse of such men, is indeed their ruine and their bane, to thrive well by evill courtes. You know what God did to *Hophai* and *Phineas*, that were as wicked wretches as the earth could beare; God let them alone, let them go on and prosper and domineere over the poore people, sent them no crosse, nor disease, nor judgement to interrupt them, but let them take their swinge in the very height of their rebellions; Why would God suffer such flagitious villaines to have their will without controule? God himselfe is pleased to give an account of it, *1 Sam. 2. 25. Because* (saith the Text) *hee would destroy them*: this is the event and issue of a wicked mans prosperity. *I have seene the wicked in great prosperity* (saith *David, Psal. 37. 35.*) *flourishing like a greene bay tree.* Why like a greene bay tree rather then like a greene oke-tree, or greene apple-tree? I will tell you what I think the reason is, The bay-tree (you know) is greene all the winter long, when oke-trees, and apple-trees, and all other farre more profitable and fruitfull trees doe wither, decay, and shed their leaves, stand naked and bare, and looke as if they were rotten & dead; then doth the bay-tree flourish and looks as fresh and as greene as it were in the midst of the spring; when other trees decay, that flourisheth. So fares it with wicked men in such Win-

ter times of the world as we had the last yeare, times of dearth and scarcity, times of want and penury: when many a poore Christian is faine to fast and fare hard, and goe with many hungry meale to bed, then do you usurers, oppressors, corn-mongers, and such others, those *mercatores humanarum calamitatum* (as *Naxianzen* calls them) those that make merchandise of poore mens miseries, then doe they prosper, then doe they thrive, then doe they flourish like greene bay-trees, when others decay, then do they flourish, then is their spring, their flourishing time. [*They flourish like greene bay trees.*]

Well, but what followes in the next verse? *After a while* (saith *David*) *I sought him, but he could not be found*; as if he had said, I sought on earth in his mansion, in his dwelling-place, thence he was gone, there hee was not to be found, afterward I sought him in heaven, to see if I could finde him there among the Saints and blessed soules above, there he was not to be found: Where was he then? Verily he was gone downe, as is said of *Judas*, *Acts* 1.25. *his part was to be gone downe to his owne place, gone downe to hell*, there *David* might have found him, but there hee sought him not. And this is the miserable end of a wicked mans prosperity.

The consideration whereof may be a stay unto us against that great temptation that troubled *David* and *Jeremy*, and still troubles them that are weake in faith, to see the prosperity of wicked men, to see it goe well with them that be evill, and ill with them that doe well. Dost thou see an ungodly man laden with wealth, honour and ease? dost thou see an hy-

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poorite and an evill liver blest as *Esau* was with the dew of heaven, and the fatnesse of the earth; dost thou see a gracelesse ruffin, one that feasts without feare, drinckes without measure, sweares without feeling, and lives without God: and yet his body vigorous, his coffers plenteous, & his estates prosperous: in a word, dost thou see them prosper that seeke not the Lord, but lye wallowing in that which God abhors, and stand chargeable in their soules with that which separates and divides betwixt man and his God: why, be not discomforted at it, be not disquieted with it, doe not fret thy selfe because of the ungodly, neither be thou envious at evill doers: but consider the end of those men, that is the Apostles expression, *James 5. 11.* You know the patience of *Iob* and what end the Lord made with him, though he curst him at first, yet he doubled his blessing upō him at last; so stay till you see what end God will make with these men: surely, O God, (saith *David*, *Psal. 73. 18.* *Thou hast set these men in slippery places; thou castest them downe into destruction:* a man that stands in *lubrico* in a slippery place, as on ice or glass, shall have much adoe to keepe himselfe upright though no body touch him, but if one should come upon him unawares, and give him a sudden justle, or a sudden rush, he hath no power in the world to uphold himselfe, but must fall and that dangerously: and this is the case of wicked wealthy men, they thinke they are ἀσάλευτοι, unmoveable and fastned on a rocke that never shall bee moved; but they are deceived; God that knows their standing, tells us hee hath set them on slippery places,

and it will not be long etc. God send some death, some judgement, some evill angell or other to give them such a sudden justle, such a sudden rush, that without great mercy on Gods part, and great repentance on their owne part, they must fall inevitably into the pit of hell. And this is the first point I desire to have handled, namely, that the right way for a man to prosper indeed is to serve and seek the Lord, whosoever prospers without seeking of God, his prosperity in this world, shall be his ruine and perdition in the world to come.

Secondly, the manner how one that desires to prosper must seeke the Lord, and that is to be done two ways:

1. *Humiliter,*

2. *Veraciter* ;

Humbly and unfainedly, sorrowfully and sincerely.

First, *Humiliter*, as the blessed Virgin *Mary* told our Saviour, *Luke 2.48. Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.* They that would find the Lord must seeke him sorrowing, with sad and heavy hearts, bewailing and bemoaning their owne miserable estate through sinne before God, as it is said of the Israelites, *1 Sam. 7.2.* When the Arke of God was departed from them, they lamented after the Lord: the best and truest lamentation in the world is to lament after the Lord, and a man hath never so just a cause to lament as when the Lord for sinne is departed from him. We reade in the story of *Micha*, *Judg. 18. 24.* that when the Souldiers had taken away *Micha's* gods, he ranne crying and weeping after them, as a
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man distracted and deprived of all his comfort, the Souldiers hearing him, turned backe and asked him, what he ailed: saith *Micha*, Yee have taken away my gods, and doe yee askeme what I aile? can ye blame a man that hath lost his gods to bee out of quiet? If *Micha* could finde in his heart to lament for the losse of a false god, a god of his own making, as good gods as that lying at the backe of the fire, warming a man or roasting of meat, (as *Esay* speaks) shall a Christian finde in his heart to lose the true God, the God of all comfort and consolation, and that by sinne which is the worst losse of all, and that not by any others taking away (as in *Michas* case) but by his owne act and wilfull default, and not beegrieved, nay not moved a whit; breake none of his sleepe, none of his wonted sports for it, as if hee reckoned God as good lost as found? God forbid. Certainly, hee that can lament for the losse of his goods, and cannot lament for the losse of his God, is worthy to lose both his goods and his God for ever. God was angry with the carnall *Jews*, *Nes. 7. 14.* because they howled upon him for *corne* and *wine*, but did not cry unto him with their hearts; they howled because God had scanted them in his mercie, but they never howled because they had scanted God in their duty; they howled for want of meanes not for want of grace, which is the greatest want of all: observe therefore what a despicable, contemptible terme God gives their prayets, he calls them *ululatus*, *howlings*, like the *howlings* of a *Dogge*, or a *Wolfe*, which is a most harsh unpleasant note in the ears of a man; such are the prayets

prayers of obstinate sinners in their extremitie to God.

*They howled unto me upon their beds; but they did not cry unto me with their hearts: tis not the howling of the mouth that God regards, but tis the cry of the heart that pierceth heaven and entreth into the eares of Almighty God: you may see it in Moses, Exodus 14. 10. When the Israelites were straightned at the red Sea; having the Sea before them, their enemies behind them, rocks and hills of each side of them, the text saith, The people cryed, and made a dolefull howling and lamentation to the Lord, Moses held his peace; and see the issue: Populus clamabat & non audiebatur, tacebat Moses & audiebatur, The people cried and God heard not them; Moses held his peace and he was heard, ver. 15. Why dost thou cry unto me (saith God) when he uttered never a word, nor made any noise that we can read of, onely his heart cryed, and that was it that God listned unto: and therefore if any man find himselfe to be *καλὸς ὀργισμένος* of such a hard and dry and brawny temper that he cannot cry with his eyes, let him cry with his heart, and it is enough. As it is said of our Saviour, *Heb. 4. 6.* That in the dayes of his flesh hee offerd prayers and supplications *προπαλαις ἰσχυρῶς*, with strong cries and teares unto God, he did not only cry, but he cryed strongly, hee did even straine himselfe in his prayers with the greatest vehemency that possibly hee could: it is not a faint and feeble cry, but it is a strong and heartie cry that wakens the Lord to listentious, as the Disciples awaked our Saviour when hee slept in the ship, *Mat. 8.* If a mother hear her child cry out right,*

night, cry heartily and strongly, what ever shee is a doing shee will lay it aside and run to still her childe: God is more compassionate and tender over his children then any earthly mother over hers; if hee doe but heare us cry heartily, cry in good earnest, hee hath not the power to containe himselfe but will arise and have mercy on us; that is the reason our prayers want successe, because they want heart, their blessing is according to their vigor. You will say it were a good comfort for a man thus to cry and lament and make his moan to God in this sad and sorrowfull manner, if a man were but sure to prosper ever the better: for that I refer you to an instance in Scripture, *1 Sam. 1. 9, 10. In 1 Chro. 4. 9, 10.* It is said of *Iabez* who was a man of sorrow, that he was more honourable than all his brethren, God prospered him and blessed him more then all the rest; how came that to passe? see *ver. 10.* And *Iabez* called on the God of Israel, saying, *Oh that thou wouldest blesse me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me,* and (saith the text) *God granted him that which he requested:* that is, granted him prosperity, granted him a prosperous and happy life; there is the fruit of a godly sorrow. A sorrowfull man (as *Iabez* was) when hee prayeth in good earnest, that God will blesse him indeed, and be with him in all his wayes, such an one shall be sure to prosper in his suit, and shall undoubtedly receive either what hee doth aske or what hee should aske: he then that desires to prosper let him seek the Lord this way, *dolenter sorrowfully.*

2 *Veraciter, truly, sincerely,* and with all his heart,

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Deut.

Deut. 4. 29. If thou seeke the Lord thy God thou shalt finde him, if thou seeke him with all thy heart. He that would find God must seeke him entirely, unfainedly, and not by halves but with his whole heart, because God though hee love *cor contritum*, a broken heart, a heart rent and torne with griefe and godly sorrow for sinne, yet hee cannot abide *cor divisum*, a cloven heart, a heart parted and divided within it selfe, which makes a man to bee (as Saint James calls him) *duplex*, a double minded man; so we translate it, but the word signifies a man with two soules, or with two mindes; such a man must never looke to prosper by his seeking of God. I will give you an instance in one or two, 1 Chron. 10. the two last verses, it is said, that *Saul* died for the sinne that he sinned against the Lord: what was that? one was for sparing *Agag* and the *Amalekites* cattell, pretending devotion when hee did it for gaine; but the maine sinne was this, that hee sought to the Witch, and sought not to the Lord, therefore the Lord slew him. Some man may say, Did not *Saul* seeke to the Lord? that he did, looke into 1 Sam. 28. 6. You shall see that *Saul* tried all wayes to seeke the Lord, and the Lord would not be found of him nor answer him, neither by Dreams, nor by Urim, nor by Prophets: How then can this hold good, that *Saul* should dye for not seeking of God, when hee sought him, and God would not answer him? the best answer that I can give is this, *Non videtur fieri quod non legitime fit*, that which is not done rightly and sincerely as it ought to bee done is counted as not done in the sight of God; *Saul's* seeking of God was counted as not seeking of God because he

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he sought him not sincerely as he ought to seek him, you may see the like in another kind, 2 King. 17. 32, 33. it is said the *Samaritan-Affyrians* that mongrel brood, which were transplanted out of *Affyria* into *Samaria*, that they feared the Lord and served their owne gods also, and the next verse saith, they feared not the Lord at all. How can these things concur? one verse saith, they did feare God, another saith, they did not feare him. *Ans.* Their feare of God is counted as no feare of God, because it was no sincere feare of God: had they truly feared God they should never have need to feare their owne Idols, for hee that truly feareth God hath his blessing, that he shall neede feare nothing else but God in this service of God; as contrarily, he that feares not God hath this curse, that God will give him such a trembling heart that he shall fear every thing but God, Idols and Divells and all, as those people did, and therefore was their feare of God counted as no feare of God, because no sincere fear; as *Sauls* seeking is counted as no seeking because it was no sincere seeing of God.

By this you see, that lip-labour is but lost labour, and lame prayers are but lost prayers in the sight of God: the Apostle gives us a caveat, 2 *John* 8. to take heed that wee lose not the things wee have wrought; a man were better lose any thing that hee hath wrought, than lose his prayers for want of true devotion: *Labia dolosa si in sermonibus sint, saltem in orationibus non sint*, deceitfull lippes and a double tongue if they bee found in our other speeches, let them not be found in our prayers in any case (saith *S. Aug.*) God forbid that a Christian should double

and dissemble with God and the world in his devotions; he that doth so let him never looke to prosper, *Solomon* speaks it peremptorily, *Prov. 28. 13.* *Hee that hideth his sins shall not prosper:* that is, as we may apply it to our purpose, he that makes Religion a cloake to cover and colour his deceit, he that makes devotion a veile to hide his sinnes, such an one shall never prosper; he therefore that desires prosperity, let him seek the Lord *veraciter sincerely.*

Thirdly, the time when we must seek God, and that is to be considered in two Circumstances:

Generally, and

Particularly.

First, *Generally;* *Hee that desires to prosper must seek God at all times.* As we say, *Nallum tempus occurrat Regi;* so no time comes amisse to God, morning or evening, midday or midnight, all times are alike for that matter; a man can never come unseasonably with a suite to God, *Exod. 18.* *Moses* sate from morning till night to heare the causes of the people, but he grew weary of it, and was faine to give it over, but there is one above, *Jesus Christ* the righteous that sits continually *ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ μεγάλου ὕψους*, *Heb. 1.* on the right hand of Majestie on high to heare the causes and complaints of his poore people and to receive and present our petitions to the divine Majestie and is never weary of it, come when we will hee is at leisure to heare us. It is a pretie observation that *St. Augustine* makes out of the parable proposed by our Saviour, *Luke 11.* where he that knockt at midnight to borrow bread of his neighbour, found all the whole family asleepe, onely the master of the house

house was awake, and he answered, and opened, and gave him that he craved, though it was at an unseasonable time; *Nullus de janitoribus respondit*, none of all the porters, none of all the servants, none of all the children made him any answer, they were all asleepe, only the Master was awake and heard him when hee called. Just so it fares with us when wee knocke and call at the doore of heaven for any mercie, none of all the Prophets, nor Apostles, none of all the blessed Saints departed make us any answer; alas, they heare us not, they sleepe in peace and are at rest from their labours, onely God Almighty, who is the Master and Maker of that blessed familie, hee, and onely he doth heare and answer, at what time soever we cry unto him; *Hee that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*, call when we will God is alway awake to heare and helpe: No time unseasonable to seeke God.

Secondly, but more particularly, for one that desires to prosper, there is a choice time and leason to seeke the Lord above all the rest, and that is early in the morning. 'Tis a pretty conjecture that the Hebrewes make upon that saying of the Angel to *Jacob*, Gen. 32.26. *Let me goe for the morning appeareth*. I take it the true reason was because *Jacob* should not bee too curious in looking and gazing upon that humane shape, wherein this great Angell Christ appeared; for he it was that wraisted with *Jacob*, but their conceit is, that the Angell which wraisted with *Jacob* all night, desired to depart when the morning appeared, because hee was now to goe to the rest of the blessed company and quire of Angells, to sing their

their morning-hymne unto God. 'Tis but a conje-
cture, but we may apply it thus; We all hope to bee
ἰσχυροί, like the Angels in heaven, let us be like them
on earth too, and how ever wee are imployed at o-
ther times, when the morning appears let us hasten to
God, and aske him blessing every morning, as our
children doe us, and no doubt but God will blesse us
the better all the day after, *Iob 8. 5, 6. If thou wilt seeke
unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Al-
mighty, surely now he will awake for thee, and make thy
habitation prosperous.* I make no doubt but a many
of you are early risers, that are up before the morning
watch, I say, before the morning watch, (i) before
the day starre or the Sunne appeare: and 'tis possible
for a man to bee early up and never the neerer, but
hee that riseth early to pray and seeke the Lord, shall
bee sure not to lose his labour, for hee shall prosper
the better all the day, *If thou wilt seeke the Lord, &c.*
Yea, but there's a place of Scripture that seemes to
crosse and contradict it, *Prov. 1. 28. They shall seeke
me early, but they shall not finde mee.* Is the Scrip-
ture contrary to it selfe? Doth God say in one place, *If
ye seeke me early yee shall finde me,* and in another place,
Though you seeke mee early you shall not finde me? How
shall we know which to believe, which to build up-
on? I answer:

There's a twofold early, Gods early, and mans
early; Gods early is to seeke him in the first place,
Ante omnia adoremus Deum (was the old rule) be-
fore wee eat or drinke, before we worke or play, be-
fore we doe any thing, doe that first; first seeke the
Kingdome of God, and that's Gods early. Mans early

is at the beginning of trouble, the beginning of sickness, the beginning of sorrow, and then the wickedst wretch upon earth will seeke the Lord, but then perhaps he shall not finde him; he that will not seeke him in peace, shal hardly finde him in trouble; he that will not seeke him in health, shall not easily finde him in sickness, yea, though he seek him early, at the very first, at the very beginning of it, as *Iosab* fled to the Altar in his perplexity, but it saved not his life, because he never came at it in his prosperity to offer upon it. So that you see, if we take mans early to seeke God, wee may chance to misse him; but if we take Gods early, we shall be sure to finde him.

You then that desire to prosper, remember Gods early; the first thing you doe in the morning, let it be seeke God, never thinke your selves drest till that be done, let thy soule have a mornings draught as well as thy body, I mean a morning prayer to fence it against the infectious ayre of the world: *Solomon* gives the reason, *Prov. 27.1.* *For who can tell what a day may bring forth?* 'Tis a Metaphor taken from a wombe, when a woman is in travell who can tell what shee will bring forth till shee bee delivered, may bee a sonne, may bee a daughter, may be a monster: so when the wombe of the morning is in travell, who can tell what a day may bring forth, may be *albus*, may be *ater dies*, may bee a white, a happy, a comfortable day, may be a blacke, a dismall, a dolefull day: we doe not know what a day may bring forth, whether judgement or mercy, whether good or bad events (therefore to prevent the worst, 'tis good to make sure worke for our owne safety, namely to seeke

seeketh the Lord in the morning and then come what will come, all shall be for the best, God will turne all to good, *Omnia cooperantur, &c. Rom. 8. All things work together for good to them that love God.*

He then that would be prosperous and speed well, let him be religious and pray well, for he that prays well can never speed amisse: and therefore if you see one that followes his calling, and is not followed with Gods blessing, it may justly be suspected, that such a one *restraineth* prayer from Almighty God, as *Eliphaz* told *Iob* in another case, *Iob 15. 4.* Now 'tis just with God to restraints prosperity from them that restraints their prayers from him, 'tis just with God to withhold his blessing from those that have not the care nor the grace to aske it. So much for the time and order of our seeking of the Lord.

Fourthly, where, or in what place wee must seeke God. Generally, wee are to seeke him every where, for God is *omni-present*, in all places to be found of them that seeke him faithfully; as *David* saith, *Psalme 139. 3. Thou art about my bed, and about my pathes, and sleest out all my wayes.* Wee little thinke when wee lye downe in our beds as a dogge lyes downe in a kennell, without any prayer, any ejaculation, any good motion to God-ward, wee little thinke that God is so neare us that hee is about our beds, and doth *observare excubias*, watch our watchings, and observe our lying downe, and our rising up.

Again, when we walke in *Circuitus*, walke the Devils round from one sinne to another, from one vanity to another, from one ill company to another,

we little think that God is about our pathes, and spieth out all our wayes: but whether wee thinke it or no, so it is for certaine; and therefore to apply it the right way; In what place soever wee seeke God, in bed or up, within door, or without, in the field, or in the road, we shall be sure to find him to our comfort and protection. But more especially, there is a proper peculiar place appointed for Christians to seeke the Lord in, and that is the Church of God, the Sanctuary or house of prayer, ther's his dwelling place, and thither must we resort to seeke him. We have an expresse law for it, Deut. 12. 5. *In that place which the Lord your God shall chuse to put his Name in, in that his habitation shall ye seek unto him.* Neither was this a law Judiciall, or Ceremoniall, that bound the Jew only for a time; but moral & perpetual, that binds the Christian for ever, to seek the Lord where he is to be found, (1) in his Sanctuary, they that refuse to come there, may justly bee termed (as *Esa* was) profane persons, as being *procul à sano*, far from the Sanctuary, and consequently out of Gods protection; for they that are thus out of the one, are out of the other also.

As *St. Austin* notes out of the parable, *Luk. 10. 30.* Concerning the man that fell among theeves, and was wounded and left halfe dead, tis noted of him that he was going downe from *Ierusalem* to *Iericho*; from the Church I warrant you: *Ierusalem* was the Church of God, the holy city; *Iericho* was a cursed place, branded with an ancient curse since the dayes of *Ioshua*, and thither lay his journey: whereupon *Saint Austin* notes, *Si non descendisset, fortasse in la-*

irones non tunc differ, had he not been descending and going downward from God and from his Church, peradventure hee had not fallen into the hands of theeves. God would have protected him, the Lord would have safe guarded and defended him, that no such evill should have betided him; but because hee was going from the Church to a cursed place, and like enough about a naughty busines, therefore God gave him over, and he fell into the hands of theeves. As many therefore as desire Gods protection and blessing, let them resort to the Church to serve and seeke the Lord.

You will say, it were a good comfort for a man so to do, if he were but sure to prosper ever the better; but we see many that frequent the Church duely and daily, that yet prosper never the more.

Ans. If it be so, then surely tis to be feared, that such came not to Church with a true intent to seeke God, but either for novelty and fashion sake, or for company to do as others doe, or for some other sinister respect; they doe not make it their errand, their aime, and the drift of their soules to seeke God: if they did, God would surely prosper them in one kinde or other: you know the place, *Pray for the peace of Ierusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* That love what? that love *Ierusalem*, that love the Church of God, that love the word of God, that love the Ministers of God, that love the ordinances of God, they shall prosper (saith *David*, *Psal.* 122. 6, 9) If they doe not prosper outwardly, they shall prosper inwardly, if they doe not prosper in goods, they shall prosper in grace, and that is the better prof.

prosperitie by farre. I say the better, and I will make it good out of *Heb. 8 6. Iesus Christ is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises.* The words at the first sight imply, that the covenant of the Gospel is a better covenant then the covenant of the Law: and againe, that the promises of the Gospel are better promises then the promises of the Law: Now if you looke into the Old Testament, you shall finde that the promises of the Law were most of them, and the maine of them, temporall promises, promises of outward prosperity, that if they kept the commandements, and sought the Lord, they should dwell in the good land, the land that flowed with milke and honey, they should have corne, and wine, and oyle in abundance, they should lay up gold as dust, and the gold of *Ophir* as the flints of the river, *Iob 22. 24.* these and the like were the promises of the Law. Now looke into the New Testament, and you shall finde the promises of the Gospel are clean of another nature, most of them spirituall promises, promises of the pardon of sins, the peace of conscience, the joy in the holy Ghost, and such like: and these, saith the Apostle, are *υπερβολα*, better promises then the other.

Hence I gather, that he that in these dayes seekes the face of God in his Church, and is of such a conversation as becommeth the Gospell, if he have not temporall prosperity, he shall have that that is better for him, he shall have the pardon of his sinnes, the favour of his *God*, the comfort of his conscience, and the salvation of his soule, which are things of greater worth then all the outward happines under hea-

ven, and will be a secret stay and comfort to the soul, when all that the earth affords will not yeeld a man one drop of true refreshing.

You know that the Prisoners in the Tower, Noblemen, and great men, and such others, they are in worse estate and condition then the poorest Water-bearer in the City: for why? though they have good diet, good lodging, good attendance, fine roomes, soft beds, curious walkes, &c. yet they are *sub ira*, they are under the wrath and displeasure of the King, and looke every day when they shall be called out to arraignment, to have sentence passe against them, and execution to be done upon them: Such is the case of a wicked wealthy man, whose finnes are unpardoned, and whose conscience is unpurged, and whose soule is unreconciled to God, he is in worse estate and condition then the poorest of Gods servants that fare with bread and water: for why? though he have great friends, great meanes, and a great estate, yet he is, *sub ira* under the wrath and displeasure of God, and where-ever he goes, the black clouds of Gods heavy vengeance hang over his head, ready upon every provocation to drop downe upon him. No marvell then that *Salomon* saith, *The righteous man is more excellent then his neighbour*, *Prov. 12. 26.* he doth not deny but a righteous man may be poorer then his neighbour, yet he saith, he is more excellent, because his excellency is intrinsecall, (*omnis decor ab intus*) the others is but outward and adventitious. Now he that shall count himselfe more excellent then his neighbour, because hee excels him in outward things, in wealth and worldly

worldly goods, it is but (as one well compares it) as if a mud-wall that the Sunne shines upon, should boast it selfe against a wall of marble that stands in the shadow.

What saith a Father, *Anideo Angelus pauper, quia non habet iumenta?* Shall wee count an Angell to bee poore because he hath not heards, and flockes, and droves of cattell, as worldly misers have? No, their riches are in another kinde. So shall we count a Christian poore and base because hee wants the wealth of the world? No, they are rich in another kinde, what he wants outwardly, he hath it inwardly, what he wants in meanes, he hath in grace, though he be not rich in the purse, hee is rich in the faith; though hee have not silver and gold, hee hath that which is better then either, hee hath the precious Pearle of Gods grace, which is of more value to enrich the soule, then all the gold and silver in the world.

The Gospel (you know) compares grace to Pearles; now Pearles are of no value to dunghill-Cocks; but to them that know the worth of them, they are the onely riches in the world; and the rather because,

First, they are durable riches, no fire can consume them, no moth can eate them, no rust take hold of them.

Secondly, they are portable riches: a man that hath a thousand pound in Pearls, may carry them all about him, and never clog him, which he could not doe if his wealth lay in other things. So here, to one that hath no grace, to a godlesse gracelesse man, the

Pearls of Gods grace is of no value; but to one that knows how to prize it, it exceeds all worldly wealth, as farre as gold exceeds dirt, and Pearles exceede pebbles; and the rather, because, first, it is durable, it will never decay, nor be utterly lost. Secondly, it is portable, it will accompany a man, wheresoever he goes, hee shall carry it with him, *σύνοικον σύνομιλον*, the friend of his bosome, the companion of his studie, and a continuall comforter in all adversity; yea, when death it selfe comes to divest and strip him of all other riches, no death can strip him of that, it is a grace that shall never leave him till it bring him to glory.

Mistake me not (I beseech you) I doe not speake this to any mans prejudice, as if riches and Religion, as if goods and grace were *ἀσύστατα*, incompatible and could not consist nor stand together; but as our Saviour said to the woman, *Luke 11.27.* when she cried out, *Blessed is the wombe that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee sucke:* our Saviour denied not that, for that was true also and undeniable, but answered her by a corrective comparision, yea rather *blessed are they that heare the word of God and keepe it:* so it is a great blessing of God to have the wealth of the world and to prosper outwardly; but it is a greater blessing to have the grace of the Spirit, & to prosper inwardly. In regard whereof *David* having prayed for many temporall blessings in the behalfe of his people, *Psal. 144. 12, 13, 14.* that their sonnes might be tall and hardy, and their daughters faire, their oxen strong to labour, their sheepe fertile and fruitfull, that there might bee no commotion nor complaining in their streets;

streets at length windeth up all with this *Epiphonema* or conclusion, Blessed be the people that are in such a case; but on the neck of it he comes in with an *Epanorthoma* or correction of his former speech, eating in and revoking his words, as if he had spoken otherwise than well, yea rather (saith hee) Blessed are the people that have the *Lord* for their *God*; as if he had said, that indeed is a blessing in some kind, but it is nothing to this blessednesse, for that is but externall, this is internall; that is but temporall, this eternall. He then that desires to prosper, whether in grace, or in goods, or in both, let him thus doe, frequent the house of God, seek the face of God, reverence the ministry of the word, yeeld thy selfe to be wrought upon by the powerfull Gospell of Iesus Christ, & this (if any thing) wil make thee to prosper.

2 Thus you have heard the first point handled, with the severall circumstances of it, touching mans duty, *To seek God*: the next is Gods mercy, *To prosper them that seek him*.

God made him to prosper.

God is the Authour of all prosperitie; as *David* speaks of promotion, it comes neither from the East, nor from the West, from the North, nor from the South, but it comes from *God*; so doth this. It is observable, that when *Isaac* blessed *Jacob*, Gen. 27. 28. Thus he said, *God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatnes of the earth, and plenty of corne and wine*; after, when he came to blesse *Esau*, hee gives him in a manner the very same blessing, verse 39. *Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatnesse of the earth and the dew of heaven from above*; but no mention is made of *God* in *Esaus*

Esau's blessing, as was in *Jacobs*. Doubtlesse this was a preface that *Jacobs* posteritie, all true Israelites, should depend upon *God* for those temporall blessings, and acknowledge themselves beholding to *God* for their outward prosperitie; and so should not *Esau's* race, I mean the men of this world, of whom *David* saith, *Psal. 17. 14.* They have their bellies filled with hid treasure; for it is *absconditum*, it is hid to them, who it is that feeds and filleth their bellies, namely, *God*; they know him not, neither do they acknowledge his gifts: but we know him & are bound in duty and conscience to acknowledge, that we have nothing but what we have received, no food to nourish us, nor meanes to maintaine us, nor hopes nor helps to preferre and prosper us, but what must come from *God*: *Non nobis Domine, non nobis*, not unto us Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise: marke the ingemination; the Prophet teacheth us to pray twice against our own praise, we are so apt to praise our selves, so ready to glory in our own prosperity; but let me advise you, you that finde that the world doth favour you, and prosperitie beginnes to come upon you, whom should you thank for it? not thank your selves, but thank your *God*; it is he that makes you to prosper.

Observe againe, that it is not barely said, *God* prospered him, but *God* made him to prosper (as it were) in despite of all those that sought and wished his undoing. As it is said in another case, *Mat. 5. 45.* *God makes the Sun to shine upon the good and upon the bad, he makes the raine to fall upon the just and the unjust*; it is not said, hee suffers it, but hee makes

in uirtute, facit exoriri; no doubt there is many a one in the world that is such a *Lucifuga*, a hater of light and lover of darknesse, whose deeds are so evill, that the very Sunne in the heavens, is even loath to cast his beames and shine upon him; and there is many a plot of ground that is purchased, and possessed by so wicked an owner, that the very clouds of heaven are loath and unwilling to drop their fatnesse upon it, but that God as it were makes them do it: Hence we see that God hath the disposing of all these temporall blessings; if the Lord undertake to make a man, all the world shall not marre him; we may see it in *Moses*, *Exod. 7. 1.* *Pharaoh* did what hee could to marre *Moses*, and to expose him to ruine and obscuritie in his very infancie; but God that undertooke to make him, never left him, nor gave him over, till hee had made him a god to *Pharaoh*; not a god whom *Pharaoh* should worship, but whom he should fear and stand in awe of; a god to execute judgements and bring plagues upon him and to remove the same again. *Hannah* saith in her song, *1 Sam. 2. 7.* *The Lord makes h poor and makes h rich*; it were as easie to God to make all rich, as to make any poore: againe, it were all one with God to make all poore, as to make any rich (for he hath the making of both) but in his providence and wisdom he hath made some of both sorts, that the one might help themselves to heaven by supplying and relieving the necessities of the other.

And therefore for our owne parts, if wee have any making, any promotion or prosperity above our fellows, we must confesse with *David*: *That it is God that hath made us, and not we our selves*; it is God that

hath made us Men, when hee might have made us Beasts, it is God that hath made us Christians when he might have made us Infidels; it is God that hath made us rich when he might have made us poore; in a word, it is God that hath made us to prosper when he might have made us to perish. (*Hee sought the Lord, and God made him to prosper.*)

But that is not all; the maine thing that I observe from hence is, the benefit that ariseth to us by seeking of God; namely, that it turnes to our owne advantage, our owne profit; God hath onely the glorie, but the gaine is wholly ours, for it is a meanes to make us prosper; as *David* speaking of the commandements, *Psal. 19.* saith, That in keeping of them there is great reward; no man shall bee a loser by keeping of Gods Commandements, but a gainer, and a great gainer too, for in keeping of them there is great reward; if we be not rewarded on earth our reward shall be the greater in heaven, *In caelis reposita est major compensatio* (saith *Calvin*) the greatest reward is reserved in the heavens. Thus saith the Lord that teacheth thee to profit, *Esa. 48. 17.* *Oh that thou haddest hearkned to my commandements! then had thy prosperity been as a flood, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: thy prosperity should have been so large and plentifull, that as a flood it should have run over the banks, and the reward of thy righteousness as the waves of the sea; that is, one reward should follow upon the necke of another, as one wave followes upon the necke of another: So Deut. 5. 29.* *Oh that there were a heart in this people to love me, and feare me as they have said, then should it goe well*

The way to prosper.

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well with them and their children after them; not that I might be a gainer and you lose, but that you and your children might reape the benefit. So that as our Saviour saith of the Sabbath, that it was made for man, not onely for Gods service, but for mans profit: so it is true of every Commandement, it was made for mans, that is, for mans good and benefit: therefore you have it so often repeated in *Deuteronomy*, These are the Commandements that I have given thee for thy wealth and for thy good.

It is a pretty observation of *Cajetan*, upon that saying of God to *Moses*, *EXO.34.1. Hew thee two Tables, Dola tibi, non mihi, ego enim non indigio tua dolatione*: Hew to thy selfe, not for me, for I need none of thy hewing, nor yet any of thy tables, it is for thy owne and thy peoples good that I bid thee hew them; so it is for our good that God bids us seeke him; God hath only the glory of it, but the benefit is our owne, for it is a means to make us prosper.

Therefore if wee love our selves and desire to doe our selves good, let us seeke the Lord. I know, that naturally wee all love our selves too much, but spiritually wee all love our selves too little; for hee that lives in sinne, he doth not love himselfe, for hee goeth the way to undoe himselfe both here and ever. 2 Chro.24.20. *Why transgresse ye the Commandements of the Lord that ye cannot prosper*: Wee use to say of one that is of a good nature, but an evill husband, *He is no mans foe but his owne*; and it is true of every one that lives in any knowne sinne, not grieving for it, nor striving against it, not making conscience to reforme it, he is his owne foe indeed, for hee doth not onely anger God, but he hinders himselfe that hee cannot

prosper, *Why transgresse ye the commandments of God that ye cannot prosper?*

The like speech you have in Ezek. 18. *Why will ye die, O house of Israel?* God doth not say, *Why will you sin, O house of Israel?* but *why will ye die, O house of Israel?* as presupposing they might well know, if they will needs sin, they must needs die; for death is the wages of sin, and followes it as the shadow followes the bodie. The Lord speaks it with indignation, *Why will ye dye?* as wondring they should love themselves no better, but even to seek their owne death, by rushing into sinne, as a horse rusheth into the battell: that's the expression that God useth (*Ier. 8. 7.*) *They rush into sin, as a horse rusheth into the battell.* And why as a horse rusheth into the battell, and not as a man rusheth into the battell? I will tell you what I thinke the reason is; The horse when he rusheth into the battell, doth not know that those whom he rusheth on be his enemies, that they will hurt, wound and kill him, but he rusheth on them without feare or wit, and rusheth upon his owne death: so foolish men doe not know, at least will not know. (*This they willingly know not*, as Saint Peter speaks) that sin is such an enemy to them, that it doth hurt, kill, and damne them, thereupon they rush upon sinne without feare, and so run upon their own destruction.

Therefore it is a good meditation of Saint Austin upon that prayer of David, *Deliver me, O Lord, from the evill man.* *Tu noli tibi esse malus, libera te Dominus a te, &c.* Bee not thou an evill man to thy selfe, pray to God to deliver thee from thy selfe being an evill man; and of an evill man to make thee a good man,

man, that thou maiest not hurt thy selfe, and then never fear any hurt that any other evill man can do thee. We say, *Nemo leditur nisi a seipso*, No man takes any hurt but he may thanke himselfe, his owne sin is the cause of it; were it not for sinne, heaven could have no quarrell against us, hell could have no power over us; our sins are they that hurt us, they are those that undo us.

The Scripture speakes of sinne lying at the doore; Gen. 4. 7. *If thou dost ill, sinne lies at the doore*. Of all doore keepers in the world, sinne is the worst, for if that lye at the doore it doth a double mischief, it keeps Gods blessing out, and it lets Gods judgements in: therefore if you desire to dwell in safety, and to prosper in your family, let not sin lie at your doore, as long as that lies there without repentance; you must never looke to prosper.

The Scripture speakes of some that are sonnes of *Belial*, and daughters of *Belial*, (the sonnes of *Eli* were sonnes of *Belial*, 1 Sam. 2. and 1. *Hannah* saith to *Eli*, *Count not thy hand maid for a daughter of Belial*) Now a son of *Belial* is taken generally for one exceedingly wicked, the very childe of the devill, that lives *absque iugo*, without a yoke, without any feare of God before his eyes; but it seemeth to be derived of (*Beli*) which signifies without, and (*jagnal*) which is to be profitable, or to prosper; and so *Belial* noteth such a one as is altogether unprofitable, and which cannot, shall not prosper. If any such be here, or if any of you that be here finde your selves to be such, that you are unprofitable members of the Commonwealth, that you doe, cannot prosper in your course

of life, I will not say yee are sons of *Belial* (what have I to doe to judge you?) onely this let me advise you, that you would consider with your selves what sinne it is that lyes at your doores, and keeps Gods blessing out.

Remove but that, drive but that away by a sincere repentance and reformation of life, and then there is hope to prosper. We see it in the nature of a stream, if it be stopt in his course that he cannot make a way in his wonted channell, it will turne in upon it selfe and flow backe againe towards the fountaine, and to the place it came from; so when you finde your selves stopt in your proceedings, that you cannot make a way into the world so prosperously, so successfully as you desire, then do as the stream doth, remeate, flow back, reflect, recoyle and turne in upon your selves, to see where the fault lyes, what sinne is the cause of it (for that's the *το κατ'εχον* the object or bar that hinders good things from us) and when you have turned backe into your selves, then turne forward unto your God, desire him to pardon and amend you, and that's the way to prosper.

I have not yet done with this point; I beseech you give mee leave, and I beseech God give mee grace, that I may apply it severally and effectually to your soules and consciences, for application is the life of all instruction; a thing proved is true to all, but it is good to none but onely to them to whom it is applied. Let me intreat therefore you patient attention yet a little longer, and you shall heare what I have to say unto you, not in any biting or galling manner (I never delighted in that straine) but in gentlenesse

and

and mildnesse to teach you how to prosper.

First, you that are Tradesmen, Shop-keepers, Handicraftsmen, that have nothing to betake to but what your honest labours and endeavours must helpe you to; doe you desire to prosper in your trades and callings? Then seeke the Lord before you set to worke, doe as they doe at Sea, that have *oculos ad caelum, manus ad clavum*, their hand upon the helme, and their eye upon the heaven: so when a mans hand is upon his worke, and his heart upon his God, then is his businesse like to prosper. Contrariwise, he that sets to his worke before he seeks to his God, takes a preposterous course, and commonly thrives thereafter. You know what *Peter* confest to Christ, *Master, we have laboured all night and taken nothing*: and no marvell, for Christ was not with him in the Ship, as soone as ever hee had gotten Christ; immediatly hee had good successe. Beleeve it, brethren, except Christ be with a man in his Shop, as he was with *Peter* in his Ship, there's no good to bee done in any Trade. What's the reason that so many Tradesmen breake and hide their heads, and runne away, but because they have not sought the Lord, nor gotten Christ unto them? they first breake with God, then breake with men: first lose their credits with God, and then it is just with God they should lose their credits with men: first leave their honestie, then lose their prosperitie: if you desire therefore that your dealings should prosper, and your trading hold and thrive, get Christ into your shoppes, and hee will bring you in Customers, hee will blesse your takings, hee will uphold you that you

you shall never breake: but if ye expell Christ out of your shops by your wickednesse, as *Peter* out of weaknesse would have had Christ beene gone out of his Ship (saying, *Lord goe from me for I am a sinfull man*) then farewell all good fortune, and never looks to prosper.

And if you would have Christ to keep with you, to dwell and make his abode with you, and so to blesse and prosper you, then bee sure that you use a good conscience in all your dealings; take heed you do not deale with your Customers, as the Prophet *Amos* complains of the dealers in his time, *Amos 8.5.* That they made the Ephah small, and the Shekle great; that is, they made the measure little and the price great: take heed of that, 'tis an abomination to the Lord, and he that useth it shall never prosper. Remember the saying, *Iob cap. 8.5.6.* *Seeke the Lord and be upright, and he will make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.*

2 You that have occasion to travell by land or by water, that have any journey to goe that you desire should prosper, then seeke to God before you set out of doores, take God along with you, request his company, crave his conduct and guidance: pray as *Eleazer* did, *Gen. 24.12.* *O Lord God of my master Abraham, I beseech thee send me good speed this day;* and God heard him, and granted his desire, hee sped as well as his heart could wish. If thou wouldest bee prosperous and speed well, bee religious and pray well; for hee that prayes well, can never speed ill. In any case goe not out of doores without seeking of God: how dost thou know what mischief may befall thee

thee in the way, if God bee not with thee to protect thee: but if thou hast sought to him, he will be a Sun and a shield unto thee, *Psal. 48.* a Sun to direct and guide thee, a shield to defend and save thee from all annoyances that may hurt thee; *He will give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy wayes;* in *viis*, non in *præcipitiis*, in thy wayes wherein thou walkest with God as *Enoch* did; not in thy headlong courses wherein thou runnest without God: and when thou runnest in the divels way, in the way of wickednesse and vanitie, thou art out of Gods protection, and must never look to prosper: (out of Gods wayes, and out of Gods protection.) In all thy journies therefore doe as *Elkanah* did, *1. Sam. 1. 19.* He rose up early in the morning to returne to *Ramath*, but he durst not set forward a foot, till hee had worshipped before the Lord: *Moses* would not stir a foot except Gods presence went with him, *Exod. 33. 15.* bear thou that mind, hold thou that godly resolution, and (my life for thine) God wil make thy way to prosper.

3 You that are as souldiers and men of war, if you bee commanded to fight the Lords battells in *causâ Christi*, against his and your enemies, and (as *Tertul.* speaks) *cruorem cruore reponere*, to retaliate blood with blood, to shed your blood for Christ that hath shed his blood for you; doe you desire that your warfare should prosper? then seeke to God before you set upon your enemies; it is God that must cover your heads in the day of battell, it is hee that must defend you from the danger of the enemy. Beleeve it, a man of war without God is but a naked man though in the mid'st of all his harnesse, *Exod. 32. 25.* it is said that *Moses* saw the people were naked after their great
F sinne,

sinne, how naked: *Non veste, sed gratia & presidio Dei*, they were naked, not so much for want of clothes, armes, as for want of the grace, favour and protection of God; and no doubt (as *Perus* observeth) *Si tunc corruissent hostes*, if their enemies had then fallen upon them, they had most shamefully foiled them. Thus it is still, let a man be never so well cloathed, never so well armed, never so wel guarded and weaponed, if he be stript of Gods protection by sinne, hee lies naked and open to all disasters, and therefore if ever any of you come upon that service, first seeke the Lord, and that is the way to prosper.

4 You that are great projectors and plotters for your advancement in the world, let me only admonish you in a word; that in all your plots you would begin with the first mover, and seeke to God before you set upon the meanes; for it is a certaine thing, no project can prosper without God: when you have wrought a businesse and ripened it, and (as you thinke) brought it to maturity, if God be not sought unto, hee can dash it and blast it in a moment, that it shall prove abortive like the untimely fruit of a woman, *Esay 8. 10. Take counsell together and it shall be brought to nought, pronounce a decree and it shall not stand, for God is with us.* No good to be done without God: *Hannah* gives this counsell in her song, *1. Sam. 2. 3. Speake no more presumptuously, let not arrogancie come forth of your mouth, for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him enterprises are established*; for any man to thinke or say that hee is able of himselfe to bring an enterprise to passe, hee speakes presumptuously, hee takes more upon him than he is able to performe, for mortall man hath not the knowledge to looke thorow a businesse, to see all the

the circumstances of it, all the wheelles that must con-
curre to accomplish it. The Lord is onely a God of
knowledge, & by him enterprizes are brought to passe;
one thing brought to passe by him, is better then a
thousand brought to passe by our selves without him,
because his mercy is over all his works, that is, (as one
well expounds it) as the warmth of a Hen is over all
her egges to cherish & to hatch them, so is Gods mer-
cy over all his works, to produce them, so as shall be
most for our good; whereas if a man sit brooding over
his own projects, & think to hatch and produce them
of himself without God, they will prove but Cocka-
trices eggs, which when they are broken a serpent ap-
peares, some mischiefe or other to shame and blame
themselves. If you desire then that your projects
should prosper, and your enterprises succeed and
come to good effect, then seek to God for counsell and
direction, beg for the secret guidance of his spirit, and
the secret working of his providence, and he shal pro-
sper thy projects and bring thy enterprizes to passe.

5. Last of all, you that are in debt and distresse for
want of meanes and maintenance; I shall endeavour to
give you counsell from my Text; you know that god-
linesse and honesty is not alwayes a defence against
debt; grace and goodnesse may keepe a man from un-
thriftnesse, but it doth not ever keepe a man from po-
verty; so that even the best, the holiest, the ho-
nestest men on earth may be in debt and deep in arre-
rages, not through any lavishnesse or riot of expence
(for Religion teacheth a good man to moderate his
hands, and to spend within the proportion and com-
passe of his estate,) but otherwaies by the inflicting or
ordering hand of God upon him to trie him. Many

wayes there be to bring a man into debt, but there is but one way (that I know) to bring a man out of debt, and that is this that is chalked out here in my text, *To serve and seeke the Lord.* If God be truly served, if the Lord be sincerely sought unto, let a mans estate be never so poore, his debts never so many, his dangers never so great, God wil find a meanes to worke him out: as the Apostle *Peter* saith, *2 Pet. 2. 9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation*: though the godly know not how they should possibly be delivered, yet God in his secret wisdom knows how to deliver them; so God knows how to deliver a poore man out of debt though he himselve know no evasion, hath no meanes either in his power or in his view; God is never at a stand, never at a losse; if we know how to pray, he knows how to helpe us.

What said the man of God to *Amaziah*, *2 Chron. 25. 9.* when he forbad him to take the Ephramites into the battel against the Edomites because God was not with them: *Amaziah* asked him, what then should become of the hundred talents which he had given them for their helpe? Cannot God, said the Prophet give thee more then this? so say I to him that trembles at the inundation of debt upon him; cannot God if he were sought unto give an issue out of this? cannot God (I say, if the stumbling-block of thy sin were taken out of the way by a sound and serious humiliation,) cannot God give thee even more then that thou owest? cannot God doe more for thee then thou art aware of? assure thy selfe he can, nay assure thy self he will: Take not my word for it, but take the Apostles word, *Phil 4. 6. μηδεν μεριμνήτε* be nothing carefull (so wee translate it) but the word signifies, be not distracted

or troubled in minde : and what is there in the world, what worldly thing (I meane) that more distracts and troubles an honest minded man then the thought and consideration of his debts and dangers ? well, but is there no remedy, is there no reliefe for one in such a case ? yes, there is one universall remedy for all evils whatsoever, and that is humble prayer; that is the harbour we must put into in all our ill weather, and that is it the Apostle directs unto in the place forecited ; be careful for nothing, but in every thing let your request be made known unto God in supplication and prayer and giving of thanks, and the God of peace *ὁ εἰρησώων* shall keep and guard your hearts as Kings are kept and guarded from all annoyances. This do then, thou that art perplexed & intangled in a labyrinth of debt, that thou canst find no outgate, no passage, no way to escape, down upon thy knees to God, *τὸ τυχεῖδος ἀνάπτειν* *ἡμῶν δὲ τῶ θεῷ* (as *Crisost.* speaks) unclaspe thy conscience before God, lay open thy grievances to him, unloade thy cares and wants and feares into the bosome of Jesus Christ; and if any meanes under heaven will ease and helpe thee, this wil do it. Beleeve it brethren, all worldly policies without this are but *Arena sine calce*, sand without lime, they will never hold together when we have most need of them, but like untempered mortar wil fall asunder : let earnest prayer be joyned with frugality, skill and industry, and then expect with comfort the end that God will give : and this is the way to make a poore man prosper.

I have but one thing more to move you in before I leave this point, and that is this, that you whom God hath already prospered and blest and enabled to doe good, would be pleased and perswaded to give some-

thing out of your plenty to the poore, & pious uses, according as God hath prospered you; it is the Apostles own word, *1 Cor. 16. 2.* He would have every one lay up in store by him to bestow on the poor and needy according as God hath prospered him; for the quantity, God hath let it to every mans conscience, only in generall he is directed, *2 Cor. 9.* to do as God hath prospered him: we should do therefore in this case, as the Jews do in another case, who because they know not the precise time when the Sabbath should begin and end, they begin it an houre the sooner, and end it an houre the later; this they call, *Additionem de prophano ad sacrum*, an addition from prophanenesse to holiness. I will not dispute the lawfulness of that act in particular, but generally in such cases as this, it is good for every man to doe rather with the most then with the least: *Quantiscumque sumptibus constet, lucrum est pietatis nomine facere sumptus.* Whatsoever cost a man is at for pious and charitable uses, it shal be a gaine unto himself. We finde *1 Chron. 22. 14.* when *David* had bestowed all his cost in preparation for the Temple (a hundred thousand talents of gold, a thousand thousand talents of silver) thus he exprest it; *Ecce in paupertate mea*, this (saith he) I have done according to my poverty; as if he had said, if I had beene able to do more, I would have done more, but this was as much as I could reach to, and this (I trust) God will accept: say not then in thy heart, if I were rich, if I were able I would do thus and thus, but do as God hath prospered thee, if thou canst not do according to thy minde, do according to thy meanes, and that is all that God requires: we read, *Mat. 21.* when our Saviour came riding to Jerusalem, some strewed their garments in the way,

way, and some cut downe bowes and branches: If thou beeſt not able to ſtrew thy garments in the way of Chriſt (that is) to cloath his poor naked members, then cut downe bowes and branches at leaſt, ſpeake comfortable words to them, plead for them, and what thou wanteſt in ſubſtance, make up in prayer. You know the poore widows caſe in the Goſpel, that put her two mites into the poore mans box; our Saviour Chriſt affirmed that ſhee gave more then all the reſt, becauſe ſhee gave all that ſhe had: which teſtified (as one ſaith) not only her liberality to God, but her confidence in God, that ſhe did verily beleewe though ſhe left her ſelf nothing, ſhe ſhould not lacke: whereupon Saint *Auguſtine* ſaith, *Divites largiuntur ſecuri de divitiis, pauper ſecurus de Domina*: a rich man gives and fears no want, becauſe he knowes hee hath enough at home: a poore man gives and feares as little, becauſe he knowes he hath enough above, there is one above will ſupply his wants.

Beleeve it brethren, he that gives any thing with a true intent to relieve the poore and to maintaine the diſtreſſed, ſhall doe himſelfe more good, than he doth them whom hee releeves; and I will prove it out of Deut. 15. 7. 10. *If there be among you a poor man, one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, nor ſhut thy hand upon thy poore brother: but thou ſhalt ſurely give him, and thy heart ſhall not be grieved when thou givest unto him becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſſe thee in all thy workes, and in all that thou putteſt thy hand unto.* Contrariwiſe, he that is ſo gripple, and ſo baſe that he will part with nothing to the poor, let him know that in ſo doing he makes a forfeiture to God of all his goods, and God will be a ſevere

severe exacter of it at his hands when hee comes to judgement.

We have a president for it in the Gospel, of the man that had a talent given him, and did not use it as hee ought; there came an extent from God, first upon the talent [*Take away his talent from him*] and then there came an extent upon his person too. [*Take away the unprofitable servant, binde him, and cast him into utter darknes.*] As *S. Peter* told *Simon Magus*, *Thou and thy money perish together*; it had been happie for him if nothing but his money had perished, but there comes an extent from God against all; He and his money must perish together. As the Idolater (as one said of *Tullian*) shall burn in hell with that same wood and stone that he adored and made a God of on earth: So the Vsurer and money-monger, that hath no goodnes nor compassion in him, shall burn in hell with the same silver and gold that he made an idol of here in this world. I will say no more but this; Shew mercy to the poore for Christs sake, and Christ will shew mercy to you for the poores sake. Doe good as God hath prospered you, and then you fulfill the Law of Christ.

I have done with the first general point of my text, namely, the ground and foundation of true prosperitie, that must be raised and built upon religion and pietie: God must be sought unto, ere any true prosperitie can be attained unto. I will dispatch the other part in a word or two, and so conclude. And that is the bounds and limitation of true prosperitie, how farre it reacheth, and how long it lasteth, and that is only during the time that a man serves and seekes the Lord. *So long as he sought the Lord* (so long, and no longer,) *God made him to prosper.*

Secondly, *So long*, How long that was you may see

See in the words before my Text (He sought the Lord in the dayes of *Zachariah*, who had understanding in the visions of God.) That wise and holy Prophet *Zachariah* was a happy Tutor to the minoritie of King *Vzziah*, and was alwayes at hand to counsell and advise him, to advertise & admonish him in things pertaining to his God and his government, and by his godly doctrine, and his holy life to guide and steer him the right way to happinesse: now as long as *Zachariah* lived, during all his time hee sought the Lord, and prospered: but as soone as *Zachariah* was gone and gathered to his fathers, it should seeme that *Vzziah* began to fall away, and his prosperitie sunke as fast as his pietie: just like the waters of *Noah's* flood, as soon as ever the fountaines and springs began to be stopt, presently the waters began to abate: so when the spring of grace begins to bee stopt up in a mans heart, and dambd up with wickednesse and sinne, it is a venture but his prosperitie will abate and dry away, and his latter end shall be worse then his beginning. Here then (as in a Mappe) wee may see and bewaile the miserable down-fall of many Christian soules, who during their minoritie and younger yeeres, while they live under good Parents, good Tutors, and good Governours, they take good courses and keepe themselves in good order, but when ever they come to their owne hand, *Sine cortice natæ*, to swimme without a corke, to saile without a sterne, and to live without a guide and without a God, they runne many times headlong into such desperate licentious courses, that a man that sees them so bad at the last, would hardly beleeve they had ever beene good at the first. It is a good observation of a late Divine in the dayes of Popery and blindnesse, the divell it seemes walked very familiarly among them: hence

we have so many stories of Hagges and Fairies, and of children taken out of cradles; and others laid in their roomes, and those they called changelings: since the light of the Gospel hath shined so clearly, these devils and Fairies have not beene seene amongst us; but still there are changelings too many in every place. Some the Priests and Jesuites have changed from the true Religion to Poperie; some the world have changed from good neighbourhood and good hospitalitie, to all manner of basenesse and miserie; some good fellowship and the Ale-house hath changed from temperance and sobrietie, to profanesse and luxurie; too many such changelings there be in the world; God of his mercy change them againe, and transforme them into a better minde, *ut mutati mutantur in orientem* (as S. Bernard speaks) that they being changed in affection to God-ward, may finde God changed in affection to them-ward, to speake after the manner of men, for if you mark the course of the world, observe it where you will, you shall never finde that such kind of persons do prosper; as those other changelings never prospered in body, so these never prosper in estate, God gives a secret curse unto them, that nothing that they have shall prosper with them. But they are like a man in a consumption, howsoever he may bouldster up himself, for a time with Physicke and Diet-drinkes, it will kill him in the end: so he that is in a spiritual *atrophy*, a spiritual consumption, that is fallen from God, hee may goe on and hold out for a time; but it will undoe him in the end. Just according to the saying of the Prophet *Ionas. ch. 2. 8. They that follow after lying vanities, forsake their own mercy.* that is, they wilfully deprive themselves of that mercy and prosperitie, which if they cleaved and flucke unto God, they might have beene

beene as sure of, as if it had been their owne to bestow upon themselves, and that was King *Vzziah* case.

For our selves therefore (to draw to an end) if we desire to goe on and prosper as we have begun, that there may be no decay, no declining, no abatement, either in our piety or in our prosperity, either in our inward graces, or in our outward fortunes; let us labour for two things which King *Vzziah* wanted, sincerity and humility.

First, labour for sincerity, be the same inwardly to God-ward, that you seeme to be outwardly to the world-ward, be like the curtaines of the Tabernacle, which they say were so wrought, that they were on both sides alike; so be you alike on both sides, in heart to the Lord, and in life to the world, else there is no hope of continuance; for *nil fictum est diuturnum*, nothing that is counterfeit, will last long; counterfeit Pearles and Diamonds may glister and sparkle, and make a faire shew for a time, but their lustre will not last; so where there is only an outward forme of godliness and not the inward power of it, it cannot last long. If an apple be rotten at the core, though it have a faire outside, it will not continue so long, but rottenness will possesse the outside also; for this is the nature of things that are unsound, they stay not there where the rottenness began, but they putrifie and corrupt more and more: so those that have rotten hearts to God-ward, may carry a faire shew for a time, but in the end the curse of God will come upon them; and their very name shall rot, that is, their hypocrisie shall be discovered, and their outside made as rotten as their inside: Beware therefore of hypocrisie & labour for sincerity.

Secondly, pray for humility, that was another grace that King *Vzziah* wanted; it is said of him, *Vers. 16.*

of this *Chap.* That God helped him til he was strong, and when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction, this was a lamentable thing, that a man in prosperity should be so swolne with pride that he should even burst againe; take heed of that, you whom God hath exalted above your fellowes; the Giants in old time were the goodliest men in the world, yet they are called in Hebrew *Naphilem* of *Naphel*, to fall, because as by their pride and presumption they fell from God, so God in his justice tumbled them down, that they fell without recovery into the pit of hell; thus (as the saying is) pride will have a fall, but humility shal have a rise, *Iob 22. 29. When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, &c.* When a man casts down himselfe in a voluntary humiliation, then God exalts and lifts him up, but when in a proud presumption he exalts and lifts up himselfe, then God dejects and casts them downe: it is a good meditation of *S. Augustine* upon the words of *David*, *Psal. 138. 9. The Lord is high and he beholdeth the lowly, &c.* see a strange wonder (saith he) God sits aloft in heaven, and yet the higher a man lifts up himselfe, the further he is from God; the lower a man casts downe himselfe, the neerer he is to God. I will close up all with that divine Epiphonema of holy *Bernard*: *Dominus Deus, qui dat gratiam humilibus, da gratiam ut simus humiles.* O Lord God, thou that givest grace to the humble, give us grace to be humbled. And that for *Jesus Christ* his sake, to whom with thee and the holy Spirit be given and ascribed all honour and glory; be done and performed all service and duty, from this time forth and for evermore, *Amen, Amen.*

FINIS.